

## Lessons Learned Record of Interview

<b>Project Title:</b>				
LL-01				
<b>Interview Title:</b>				
LL-01 [REDACTED]				
<b>Date/Time:</b>				
2/24/2015; 9:00-10:30am				
<b>Location:</b>				
Brussels, Belgium				
<b>Purpose:</b>				
RE: NATO Coalition in Afghanistan, ISAF/USFOR-A Civ-Mil relations				
<b>SIGAR Attendees:</b>				
Candace Rondeaux				
<b>Non- attribution Basis:</b>	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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<b>Prepared By:</b> (Name, title and date)				
Candace Rondeaux 4/28/2015				
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Krisanne Campos				
<b>Key Topics:</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NATO Coalition Coordination with USG</li> <li>• NATO ISAF Expansion and Strategy</li> <li>• ISAF/COMISAF Civ-Mil Coordination on Development Projects</li> <li>• Kajaki Dam and Kandahar Power Bridging Project</li> </ul>				

### Civ-Mil Divide

There was definite impatience on the military side with the development side and the pace of development. (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

It was an apparent unwillingness to deal with realities on the ground.

There was a drive from ISAF to get moving on the District Development Program and to get the main line of civilian programs aligned with this effort to extend the writ of the Afghan government. It was a challenge for ISAF to understand that IDLG was not a ministry; it was an interlocutor between center and the periphery and that it really didn't have any real purview over development issues. ISAF was pushing for IJC, IDLG and the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Agriculture to accelerate district development. The plan was to start with 3 to 5 districts over the course of several months then expand—there ultimately 120 priority districts (out of roughly 340). There was no real development expertise in COMISAF and the USAID expert who was there was essentially pushed out because her views on development didn't align with McChrystal's view. (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

There was more coordination with the new McChrystal plan in place and there was much better cooperation from development agencies particularly with the US, UK, Germany and Canada. It was more challenging to deal with non-

governmental organizations and multi-lateral organizations. (Relates an example about working with the World Health Organization on deconflicting with their plans to do a polio vaccination ahead of the Marjah Operation.)

We did this upside down. The concept of having civilian development follow the military effort was fine in theory but many times was useless in practice. If you cleared out an area of the Taliban, the area was still contested and the absorption capacity of the local community was limited. You didn't have the human capital build on....The push of the IJC and ISAF was to take these newly minted expat Afghan governors and push them into the districts through the CTAP (Civilian Technical Assistance Program) program but they would refuse to go down to Kandahar or Helmand because of the security issue. Why would you want to go down to Kandahar or Helmand? They would get down there and they would either be kidnapped or killed by the Taliban or they would get them offices and there would be no electricity or water. It was a mess.

#### **Kandahar City-Kandahar Power Bridging Solution**

The American military seemed to have very little respect for public money. CERP was a dark pit of endless money for anything with no accountability. It was really strange to observe. They would bend the rules in any way they wanted. Millions of dollars were committed with such callousness.

Kandahar City Power project developed by UK two-star Gen. Nick Carter. He and McChrystal got on splendidly. The idea was winning hearts and minds by bringing power to Kandahar. The thought was that the stable provision of electricity would lead to better street lighting better security and a stable supply of power to businesses.

KCP was presented a bridging solution for Kajaki Dam which would not work even after they brought up all three turbines because there had been so much damage to the other two in the interim. The hope was that later you can connect to Kajaki. But, to have a "bridging solution" to Kajaki means you need a plan for taking Kajaki online or a plan for refurbishing the Kajaki turbines. But there was no plan. So it was a bridging solution to what? This is a bridge in the middle of nowhere. This is Nick Carter's idea and he sells it to McChrystal.

COIN was a magic term that would make everything ok. If you said something was good for COIN debate should cease.

So I was asked to evaluate the plan when it came through. I read this plan and it was basically like get the international community behind it.. The assumptions behind the KCP plan made no sense. You were talking about fuel for generators at a cost of over \$100 million a year. My job was to get the international community to pay for it. We went to the World Bank they didn't want to touch it. From January to April 2010 we worked on this. People look at it and they think it's crazy. That's when Eikenberry was like no way. I argue against it but I lose the fight in April/May.

I look it as a business plan and it looks nuts and (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) agrees it's crazy, but McChrystal wants this. We debate for a while. We're hired as expert to have an opinion. Don't we have an obligation to point off the flaws if not to kill it? (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C). We raised the issues and it was like "but M4 wants this. We're not supposed to critique it." (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) says look into it and brief me.

We meet with people at USAID who also are against it. We go to Kandahar to meet with (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) who was for it. My main contentions were 1) the cost—it was more expensive than they thought it would be. The project plan required three 10 megawatt generators that they put at \$3 to \$6 million each. What they had done to arrive at the estimates for the generators was to look online. What they didn't calculate was that to get generators with those specs would be a two year wait. You would need to pay extra to jump ahead in the line for production. They way underestimated the cost. You're talking about \$100 million in fuel to run generators for a year. But the international community will not pay for this. Zakhiwal told them please don't do this we have maybe \$12 million for the whole country for fuel subsidies. If you do this it will cause divisions in the north.

[Suggests that Kandahar Power Bridging Solution was paid for by CERP money] We also said it would distort the market and it would be an added burden for the logistics line for brining the fuel into Karachi then up the line through Peshawar, over the border and down to Kandahar.]



The folks in Kandahar just think we're typical civilians who can't see the benefits in terms of COIN and we in turn as civilians thought they were typical because they just think the military thinks short-term in the field and none of this makes sense.

Even with COIN effects in Kandahar in mind it didn't add up you had maybe 1-2 million people in the province and the power grid served maybe up to 600,000 to 700,000 people. Who will this benefit in Kandahar? Only the wealthy and those already connected to the grid. The COIN effect for the poor was negligible and the inequality becomes all the more obvious.

The military says that KPC will generate \$70 million in economic revenue for the province a year but the annual fuel costs are \$100 million so already right from the start you're saying that the project is losing \$30 million a year. \

The Minister of Finance [Zakhiwal] was totally against this. He says to McChrystal, 'Please don't do this! I have \$12 million for the whole country for fuel. It will create serious problems if Kandahar gets special treatment.'

[References similar issues with power plant in Kabul which comes online well after Uzbekistan transmission line deal is in place.]

[redacted] went to the embassy to meet with SIGAR at the embassy and we met with Arnie Fields. He says yes it looks like a disaster but we can't do anything preemptively. That's not our mandate. Sorry. [McChrystal and Eikenberry also squared off on the KPC and Eikenberry lost that fight. References cables from this period.] Anyone who looked at this more closely could see that the math didn't add up that it was all nonsense.

#### **RE: McChrystal Strategic Review**

In the first draft of McChrystal's review of the strategy there was no mention of al-Qaeda. In 2009, the perception was that al-Qaeda was no longer a problem. But the entire reason for being in Afghanistan was al-Qaeda. So then the second draft included them. There were no internationals on McChrystal's advisory group for the review. It was all Americans—think tankers and talking heads.

The question came up during the review of the first draft on references to the intervention being a war. There are big implications with calling this a war. Legally under international law that has serious implications. So we checked with the legal team and they agree it's not a war...so a line in the final draft of the review says "While not a war in a conventional sense...."

The strategic review involved think tankers from right to left with broad perspectives—the selling point was that they were brought into Kabul and regional commands. But we got the sense that this was all coming to a predictable outcome so we can get approval of COIN and the whole Iraq Redux approach.

#### **RE: State Department role/civ-mil relations**

It was an inherently flawed approach because military strategy should be based on political strategy. The political strategy is missing. What is it we want to achieve. The politicians coped out and passed the buck to the military. We were supposed to keep in mind that there was going to be "no nation building" but COIN is nation building under a different name.

#### **RE: Strategic challenges**

Afghanistan has two geographically distinct challenges. On the one hand you have Herat and Mazar that are relatively tranquil and then you have the provinces in the south and southeast where there are serious challenges. Strategically, you could look at two separate approaches here. NATO is based on the idea of "containment." The alliance should have looked at southern areas and contained the threat there while consolidating the successes in the north and west. Instead we saw an enemy-centric strategy with a push of resources toward the south and east. In the north and west, Afghans see all the resources going to the south and east. So the incentive is to invite insecurity into my region to bring attention and development. The warlords then see an opportunity to fill the vacuum. "Taliban" becomes a catch all phrase for brigands of all sorts.

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## SIGAR LESSONS LEARNED RECORD OF INTERVIEW

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Korengal had no strategic value. It was just a whack a mole strategy. Pakistani intel would brief ISAF on the Taliban would just call them miscreant. We elevated the Talibs onto a pedestal that they did not deserve. We incentivized them to be more of a threat than they really were.

**(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)**

The **(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)** is in place by the time the strategic review is submitted. NATO had it backwards with the operational plan coming first and the strategy second. McChrystal took the Kissinger approach where you give the president three options: do nothing, nuke 'em or the middle. McChrystal ultimately presented three options and only one was possible.

The tendency was to ignore anyone who said something different from what the commander wanted to hear. Anyone who raised questions were viewed as spoilers and naggers and the attitude was let's not include them...No objective independent party could reach in and flag concerns.

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